

Appl. No. : 10/659,424
Filed : September 10, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-29, and 31 remain pending in the present application, Claim 1 having been amended. The claims set forth above include marking to show the changes made by way of the present amendment, deletions being in ~~strikeout~~ and additions being underlined.

Initially, Applicants would like to thank Examiner Basinger for the courteous interview extended to Applicants' counsel, Michael A. Guiliana, on March 22, 2006. During the interview, Applicants' counsel pointed out that even if the Matsuda et al. and Morrison references were combined, such combination would not result in the watercraft recited in Claims 1, 24, 29, and 31.

For example, during the interview, Applicants' counsel noted that the Matsuda et al. reference is directed to a steering system that increases the power output of the engine if the handlebars are turned to the maximum turning positions. However, nothing in the Matsuda et al. reference shows or suggests that the additional elevated output of the engine should be varied in accordance with additional forces applied to the handlebars after the handlebars have been turned to the maximum positions.

Additionally, Applicants' counsel pointed out that the Matsuda et al. reference also discloses embodiments (Figure 8) having electronic switches which completely avoids the need for the cable system illustrated in Figures 4-6.

During the interview, Applicants' counsel also pointed out that the Morrison reference, although it teaches the use of a proportional force sensor on the pedal of a bicycle, it does not suggest that such a sensor should be used on the steering system of any vehicle, let alone a watercraft. Additionally, Applicants' counsel pointed that even if the proportional force sensor of the Morrison reference were combined with the steering system of the Matsuda et al. reference, there is no suggestion or teaching that the controller of the Matsuda et al. reference should be configured to change the output of the engine in accordance with changes in the force detected by the proportional sensor.

As a result of the interview, it was agreed that Claim 1 could be broadened, as reflected in the amendments set forth above, and that Claims 24, 29, and 31 are allowable as they stand. Thus, Applicants submit that all the outstanding rejections have been overcome.

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CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: April 12, 2006

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